

# CWY Grammar

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# Sketch of Cherokee

- Overview Cherokee Grammar:

Cherokee is a “verb-driven” language where 80% of all forms are verbs or verb-derived. Categorized as “polysynthetic,” one makes and changes meaning by putting a sound “on” a word rather than just using a new word. Called “affixes,” they can go in front (prefix), behind (suffix), or even in the middle (infix) of a verb or word.

Verbs in Cherokee contain three basic ideas:

Who – What – When. The “who” refers to the person(s) or things doing the action, and this is where what are called “pronominal prefixes” are used. The “what” is the action or state being expressed which is the “verb stem” or “verb root.” Finally the “when” refers to the tense or when the action or state is occurring, and this is where the “tense suffix” is found.

# Sketch of Cherokee

- Overview Cherokee Grammar:

As a quick example on the basic structure of a verb, take the example of /jigowhtiha/ ‘I see it’. In this verb, the /ji-/ is a pronoun prefix meaning ‘I’. /-gowhti-/ is the verb stem that means “see”. /-ha/ is the tense suffix indicating the action of the verb is in present tense. Other prefixes and suffixes can be used on the verb, but the three parts here are the core pieces.

Verbs in Cherokee fall into three basic categories, Person Verbs, Standard Verbs, Non-Person Verbs. Person verbs are those that specifically identify that ONLY humans are doing the action. Standard verbs often relate to people, but can be used for animals and objects as well. Non-person verbs refer to actions or states that do not involve people (things such as the weather, which is something found in English as well).

# Sketch of Cherokee

- Overview Cherokee Grammar:

Known as an “aspect” rather than “tense” language, Cherokee has five “aspect stems” for each verb. It’s not important to go into what this means at present, but what is important is to know that the “aspect stems” are the basis for “tense” and that the individual aspect stems neither derive from each other or are predictable one to the other.

\*Knowing /jiwoniha/ ‘I’m speaking’ doesn’t help learn to say ‘I spoke’ /agiwonisv’i/.

The five aspect stems and the tenses that they relate to are:

Present Continuous Aspect – Present Tense

Immediate Aspect – Immediate Command and Past.

Incompletive Aspect – Habitual, Progressive Past and Future.

Completive Aspect – Remote Past and Completive Future.

Infinitive/Deverbal Aspect – Infinitive.

## Aspect and Tense

### ASPECT STEM

Cherokee typically has five aspect stems for each verb. What this means is that each verb has five different forms which are NOT predictable off each other. There is no rule or general pattern to follow from one aspect to another.

Essentially, one must learn all five aspects as separate forms, though the forms do often bear close resemblance to each other. The aspect stems are the frames for verb tenses.

### VERB TENSE

Tenses in Cherokee are built off of the various aspect stems – Specific tenses are associated with specific Aspect Stems. The Five Aspect Stems and their associated tenses are given in the box to the right.

On the next page is an example of this relationship between aspect and tense.

- **PRESENT ASPECT STEM**
  - Present Tense
- **IMMEDIATE ASPECT STEM**
  - Immediate Command Tense
  - Immediate Past Tense
- **INCOMPLETIVE ASPECT STEM**
  - Habitual Tense
  - Progressive Past Tense
  - Progressive Future Tense
- **COMPLETIVE ASPECT STEM**
  - Completive Past Tense
  - Completive Future Command Tense
  - Completive Future Tense
- **INFINITIVE ASPECT STEM**
  - Infinitive Tense
  - Obligatory Infinitive Tense

## Aspect and Tense : Verb Example “Speak”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRESENT ASPECT STEM                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Present Tense</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -woni-                             <div> ji-woni-ha ‘I’m speaking’ </div> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IMMEDIATE ASPECT STEM                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Immediate Command Tense</li> <li>– Immediate Past Tense</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -wonihi                             <div> hi-wonihi ‘Speak!’ </div> <div> ji-wonihi ‘I (just) spoke’ </div> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INCOMPLETE ASPECT STEM                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Habitual Tense</li> <li>– Progressive Past Tense</li> <li>– Progressive Future Tense</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -wonisg-                             <div> ji-wonisg-o’i ‘I speak’ </div> <div> ji-wonisg-v’i ‘I was speaking’ </div> <div> ji-wonisg-esdi ‘I will be speaking’ </div> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMPLETIVE ASPECT STEM                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Completive Past Tense</li> <li>– Completive Future Command Tense</li> <li>– Completive Future Tense</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -wonis-                             <div> agi-wonis-v’i ‘I spoke’ </div> <div> hi-wonis-v’i ‘You will speak’ </div> <div> da-ji-wonis-i ‘I will speak’ </div> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INFINITIVE ASPECT STEM                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Infinitive Tense</li> <li>– Obligatory Infinitive Tense</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -wonihisdi                             <div> u-wonihisdi uduli ‘He wants to speak’ </div> <div> u-wonihisdi ‘He has to speak’ </div> </li> </ul>

## Aspect and Tense : Verb Example “Open”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRESENT ASPECT STEM                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Present Tense</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -sdu'i-                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a-sdu'i-ha            'He is opening it'</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IMMEDIATE ASPECT STEM                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Immediate Command Tense</li> <li>– Immediate Past Tense</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -sdu'i                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hi-sdu'i                'Open it!'</li> <li>a-sdu'i                'He just opened it'</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INCOMPLETE ASPECT STEM                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Habitual Tense</li> <li>– Progressive Past Tense</li> <li>– Progressive Future Tense</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -sdu'ih-                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a-sdu'ih-o'i            'He opens it'</li> <li>a-sdu'ih-v'i            'He was opening it'</li> <li>a-sdu'ih-esdi          'He will be opening it'</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMPLETIVE ASPECT STEM                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Completive Past Tense</li> <li>– Completive Future Command Tense</li> <li>– Completive Future Tense</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -sdu'is-                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>u-sdu'is-v'i            'He opened it'</li> <li>a-sdu'is-v'i            'He will open it'</li> <li>d-v-sdu'is-i            'He will open it'</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INFINITIVE ASPECT STEM                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Infinitive Tense</li> <li>– Obligatory Infinitive Tense</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -sdu'isdi                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>u-sdu'isdi uduli      'He wants to open it'</li> <li>u-sdu'isdi              'He has to open it'</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Applicative: “Open for Him”	/-sdu’is-/ Completive Aspect Stem
<p>PRESENT ASPECT STEM /-<b>eha</b>/</p> <p>– Present Tense /-eha/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-sdu’is- a-sdu’is-<b>eha</b> ‘He is opening it for him’</li> </ul>
<p>IMMEDIATE ASPECT STEM</p> <p>– Immediate Command Tense /-<b>si</b>/</p> <p>– Immediate Past Tense /-<b>eli</b>/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-sdu’is- hi-sdu’i(s)-<b>si</b> ‘Open it for him!’ gv-sdu’is-<b>eli</b> ‘I just opened it for you’</li> </ul>
<p>INCOMPLETIVE ASPECT STEM /-<b>eh</b>-/</p> <p>– Habitual Tense /-eho’i/</p> <p>– Progressive Past Tense /-ehv’i/</p> <p>– Progressive Future Tense /-ehesdi/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-sdu’is- ji-sdu’is-<b>eho</b>’i ‘I open it for him’ ji-sdu’is-<b>ehv</b>’i ‘I was opening it for him’ ji-sdu’is-<b>ehesdi</b> ‘I’ll be opening it for him’</li> </ul>
<p>COMPLETIVE ASPECT STEM /-<b>el</b>-/</p> <p>– Past Tense /-elv’i/</p> <p>– Future Command Tense /-elv’i/</p> <p>– Future Tense /-eli/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-sdu’is- ak-sdu’is-<b>elv</b>’i ‘He opened it for me’ gv-sdu’is-<b>elv</b>’i ‘I will open it for you’ da-ga-ji-sdu’is-<b>eli</b> ‘I will open it for them’</li> </ul>
<p>INFINITIVE ASPECT STEM /-<b>ehd</b>-/</p> <p>– Infinitive Tense /-ehdi/</p> <p>– Obligatory Infinitive Tense /-ehdi/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-sdu’is- ak-sdu’is-<b>ehdi</b> uduli ‘He wants to open it for me’ ji-sdu’is-<b>ehdi</b> ‘You have to open it for him’</li> </ul>



<b>Set A Verbs</b>	In the Present, Immediate, and Incomplete Aspect Stems, Set A is used. In the Complete Aspect, Set A is used on Command and Future Tenses. In the Past Tense of the Complete Aspect, Set B is used. The Infinitive Aspect Stem also uses Set B prefixes.
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<b>Set B Verbs</b>	All Aspects and Associated Tense Forms retain the Set B prefixes.
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<b>Person Verbs</b>	All Aspects and Associated Tense Forms retain Person Set prefixes.
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Aspect Stem Tenses	PRESENT	IMMEDIATE	INCOMPLETE	COMPLETE	INFINITIVE
	Present Tense	Command Tense	Habitual Tense	Past Tense	Infinitive Tense
		Past Tense	Past Tense	Command Tense	
			Future Tense	Future Tense	

<b>Grammar Processes Associated with Aspect</b>	NONE	'Can' & 'Cannot' 'Ought To' Forms	Agentive Past Tense Paired with Verbs "Start" "Finish"	Negative Command Applicative 'Go' Suffix 'Before' Forms 'When' Habitual 'Came' Suffix Repetitive Suffix 'Go Around' Suffix	'Supposed To' Forms 'Have To' Forms Object Nouns Place Nouns
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# Sketch of Cherokee

- Precision and Meaning

What separates Cherokee from English the most is that when expressing oneself you have to be “precise” in what you say. Cherokee has a much wider range of verbs to denote very specific actions over generic forms common to English. For example, Cherokee has a specific verb that means “washing dishes” and one specific for “washing one’s own hair” or even “washing another person’s hair.” This kind of specificity is one of the things that makes Cherokee the language it is.

To the question “What are you doing tonight?” one could say “I’m going to work” in English. In Cherokee, you’d have to use the future tense and you’d have to be clear about whether or not you would actually be “going” in the sense of movement from one place to another or “going” in the sense of “will be.”

# Sketch of Cherokee

- Precision and Meaning

Cherokee also has what are called “classificatory verbs” that consist of a verb set (normally five verbs) that are different based on the physical nature of the object being expressed. To say “I have a book” is different than to say “I have a dog” or “I have coffee.” Almost all verbs that deal with “handling” are classificatory so actions like “hold,” “get,” “bring,” “leave (object),” “find,” “have,” etc. are classificatory. In addition, concepts such as “have” require several types of “haves” depending on where and what is meant. “I have five dollars” is a different form than saying “I have five dollars in my pocket” or “I have five dollars in my hand.”

The five classificatory verb forms are: Living, Flexible and Soft, Long and Rigid, Compact and Solid (also neutral), and Liquid.

# Cherokee Sounds

- Sound inventory of SIX Vowels, SIX “Diphthongs,” and TWENTY-FOUR Consonants.

- Six Vowels:

**a e i o u v**

- Six Diphthongs:

**ay ey iy oy uy vy**

- Twenty-Four Consonants:

**g k m h j s n t d l tl dl hl hw  
hn hy kw gw ts y sh ch w ’**

- Cherokee “Tone/Pitch” and Vowel Length:

Tone 1, 2, 23, 3, 32, 4 Short and Long Vowels

# Cherokee Vowels

- a e i o u v

/a/ 'ah' as in 'nod' 'log'

/i/ 'ee' as in 'see' 'bee'

/u/ 'ew' as in 'dew' 'blue'

/e/ 'eh' as in 'bed' 'red'

/o/ 'oh' as in 'road' 'oat'

/v/ 'uh' as in 'sunk' 'ump'

- Cherokee Words

a      ada 'wood'

e      wesa 'cat'

i      isa 'flour'

o      osi 'fine'

u      uguku 'owl'

v      vsgina 'that'

ama 'water'

egwa 'huge'

ije 'new'

dosa 'mosquito'

uduliha 's/he wants it'

svgi 'onion'

# Cherokee Dipthongs

- ay ey iy oy uy vy  
/ay/ as in ‘sky’ ‘my’                      /ey/ as in ‘day’ ‘grey’  
/iy/ as in ‘See ya’                              /oy/ as in ‘soy’ ‘boy’  
/uy/ as in ‘Do ya know?’                      /vy/ as in ‘Hey ya’ all’
- Cherokee Words with Dipthongs:  
ayo ‘ouch’                      sdeyida ‘rope’                      iya ‘pumpkin’  
doya ‘beaver’                      uyo’i ‘bad’                      igvyi ‘first’
- If a Cherokee vowel comes before the consonant /-y/, it produces a blended sound called a “dipthong.”  
The vowel lengthens (gets longer) with /i/, /o/, /u/, and /v/, but is not a “new” sound. With /a/ and /e/, it creates new sounds.

# Cherokee Consonants

• g k m h j s n t d l tl dl hl hw hn hy  
kw gw ts y sh ch w ’

## • Cherokee Words

/g/ go’i ‘grease’

/k/ koga ‘crow’

/m/ Mosi ‘Moses’

/h/ howa ‘ok’

/j/ jisgwa ‘bird’

/s/ sagwu ‘one’

/n/ nvya ‘rock’

/t/ tohi ‘well’

/d/ doyu ‘really’

/l/ lolo ‘locust’

/tl/ tla ‘not’

/dl/ dlv ‘about’

/hl/ hleki ‘soon’

/hw/ hwena ‘Go’

/hn/ ahnawo ‘shirt’

/kw/ sikwa ‘pig’

/gw/ sgwu ‘too’

/y/ yona ‘bear’

/hy/ uhyona ‘horn’

/ts/ tsgoya ‘bug’

/w/ waka ‘cow’

/sh/ ajvshdi ‘light’

/ch/ chuga ‘flea’

/’/ na’v ‘near’

# Cherokee Tone/Pitch

- Cherokee has SIX tones:

Tone 1: Low falling

Tone 2: Normal steady

Tone 23: Mid rising

Tone 3: High steady

Tone 32: Mid falling

Tone 4: High falling

- Though tone/pitch is referred to by these numbers, you will see arrows used to represent Cherokee tone which will be super- or sub-scripted on each syllable.

Tone 1: a<sub>↓</sub>

Tone 2: a (Not marked)

Tone 23: a<sup>↗</sup>

Tone 3: a<sup>→</sup>

Tone 32: a<sup>↘</sup>

Tone 4: a<sub>↓</sub>



# Cherokee Vowel Length

- Though any vowel can be short or long, only Tone 2 and Tone 3 can be short. This is because the other tones “move” from one tone to another . Remember, though, that Tone 2 and Tone 3 can be long as well. Short vowels, when marked in class or on handouts, will be indicated by underlining.
- Examples of short and long vowel marked forms:  
ujalesdi ‘wheat’                      /-ja-/ marked as short vowel  
achuja ‘boy’                                /a-/ marked as short vowel

Note that long vowels are not marked in these examples since the “default” length is often long.

## GRAMMAR: /Tla yi-/ Negation

- Negation requires two things. The first is the word /tla/ and the second is /yi-/ or /y-/ which goes on the verb. Use /yi-/ before consonants and /y-/ on vowels. If there is no VERB to negate, use the form /tla yigi/ ‘it is not’ for present tense.

### /Tla yi-/ Negation - Present Tense Verbs & Statements

- Tla y-uhyvdla. ‘It is not cold.’                      Tla yi-ganolvsga. ‘It is not windy.’
- Tla ahida yigi. ‘It is not easy.’    \*No verb.
- Tla osda y-agwadanhta. ‘I do not feel good.’

## GRAMMAR: /-s/ Question Marker

/-s/ Question Marker: Place the suffix /-s/ on the end of any word in the statement, preferably the first word in the sentence.

Uhyvdla.	Uhyvdla- <b>s</b> ?	Sdaya agasga.	Sdaya- <b>s</b> agasga?
‘It is cold’	‘Is it cold?’	‘It’s raining hard’	‘Is it raining hard?’

This process for creating a question is very common in Cherokee. There is another way to make questions, but this is another process we will learn at a later date.

When the question words /Gado/ ‘what’ /Hadlv/ ‘where’ /Hila/ ‘how’ /Gago/ ‘who’ are used, /-s/ is not necessary since these forms indicate a question by their very nature.

# Pluralizing Non-Verbs

- /Di-/

On words that begin with either a consonant or the vowel /a/.

- /J-/

On words that begin with the vowels /u/, /o/, /v/, and /e/.

- These patterns apply to objects and adjectives. BUT, there is a slightly different process that is required when adjectives relate to LIVING things such as people or animals. We will examine that process in a later lesson.

## /Di-/

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| • Sgwatlesdi   | Di-sgwatlesdi  |
| • Aditasdi     | Di-ditasdi     |
| • Gasgilo      | Di-gasgilo     |
| • Gajanuli     | Di-gajanuli    |
| • Gigage'i     | Di-gigage'i    |
| • Adayvlatvsgi | Di-dayvlatvsgi |
| • Sdu'isdi     | Di-sdu'isdi    |
| • Ahida        | Di-hida        |

## /J-/

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| • Utana     | J-utana     |
| • Usdi      | J-usdi      |
| • Unega     | J-unega     |
| • Uweti     | J-uweti     |
| • Ulsuhwida | J-ulsuhwida |
| • Uwoduhi   | J-uwoduhi   |
| • Egwa      | J-egwa      |

# Pluralizing Verbs

- /D-/ before Vowels

On PRESENT tense verbs that begin with a VOWEL.

- /De-/ before Consonants

On PRESENT tense verbs that begin with a CONSONANT.

- /T-/ on /h-/ 'You' Commands

On COMMAND tense verbs that begin with /h-/ 'You'.

When dealing with the idea of verbs "pluralizing," the point to remember is whether the "object" of the sentence is one object or more than one object. If it is more than one object, that will make the verb "plural."

/D-/ Verb begins with a vowel

- Agiha D-agiha
- Agwaduliha D-agwaduliha
- Agineha D-agineha
- Agwvya D-agwvya
- Agi'na'a D-agi'na'a

/De-/ Verb begins with a consonant

- Jigowhtiha De-jigowhtiha
- Jigi'a De-jigi'a
- Jisgwatle'a De-jisgwatle'a
- Jigoliye'a De-jigoliye'a

/T-/ Verb begins with /h-/

- Hisdu'i T-isdu'i
- Hisduhvga T-isduhvga
- Hutagi T-utagi
- Hwigi Wi-t-igi
- Hwinegi Wi-t-inegi

# Adjectives / Adverbs

- Sgwu  
'Too' 'Also'
- So'i  
'Other' 'Next'
- Sdikida  
'A little bit'
- Ugodi / Unigodi  
'A lot' 'Many'
- Gayohli  
'A few'
- Igada  
'Some'
- Nigada  
'All' 'Everything'
- Kanigida  
'None' 'Zero'

- Uwoduhi  
'Pretty'
- Usdi  
'Small'
- Utana  
'Big'
- Egwa  
'Huge'
- Ahida  
'Easy'
- Sdaya  
'Hard'
- Asamadi  
'Smart'
- Dajetla  
'Better'

- Judalehnvda  
'Various' 'Different'
- Ulsgeda  
'Important'
- Uyehldi  
'Reason'
- Ayanuli  
'Fast' (Living)
- Gajanuli  
'Fast' (Non-Living)
- Uhlisdi  
'Quickly'
- Usganoli  
'Slow'
- Sigwu  
'Again' 'More'
- Doyu / Udohiyu  
'Really' 'Very'

- Ale  
'Or'
- Asehno  
'But'
- -hno  
'And'
- -hehno  
'Because'
- Gvhdi  
'With'
- Aje / Ije  
'New'
- Uweti  
'Old'
- Usegajv  
'Barely'
- Asedv  
'Maybe'

# Adjectives / Adverbs

- Iyudali  
'Apart' 'Often'
- Yudaha  
'Sometimes'
- Ilvhiyu'i  
'Ever'
- Tla Ilvhiyu'i  
'Never'
- Iyusdi  
'Like' 'Similar'
- Iyuwakdi  
'Time' 'Times'
- Jugvwahldi  
'Price' 'Cost'
- Nuhlisdv'i  
'Fast as Possible'

- Kali'i  
'Full'
- Usihwa  
'Empty'
- Nudale'i  
'Different'
- Sihnv  
'Than'
- Udanhti  
'Friendly'
- Udli  
'Away'
- Ugasasda  
'Sweet'
- Ugasawa  
'Warm'

- Sudalegi  
'One Topic, Matter'
- Utsgwisdi  
'A lot' 'Many'
- Udanvgalvda  
'Clean'
- Uhlinigida  
'Powerful' 'Strong'
- Unegujida  
'Cruel' 'Mean'
- Usgwanikdi  
'Interesting'
- Uwelihisdi  
'Worried'
- Uwohldi  
'Funny'
- Uyelo'isdi  
'Suddenly'

- To'i  
'Motionless'
- Ulisdi  
'Weak'
- Ugvhahli  
'Part'
- Ugvwiyuha  
'Instead'
- Uhloyi  
'Same Kind'
- Gageda  
'Heavy'
- Uhwageda  
'Thick'
- Usage'i  
'Thin'
- Ujosdi  
'Confusing'

# Adjectives / Adverbs

- Uwasa  
'Alone' 'Only'
- Asegi  
'Peculiar' 'Odd'
- Asesgini  
'However'
- Didanelv'i  
'At Home'
- Eladi  
'Down' 'On Foot'
- Ganayegi  
'Dangerous'
- Ganali  
'Lazy'
- Gasagwalv'i  
'Round'

- Uyo'i  
'Bad'
- Uyojv'i  
'Broken'
- Vsgina  
'That'
- Hi'ana  
'This'
- Wanige'i  
'Soft'
- Gadaha'i  
'Dirty'
- Agahliyi  
'Eager'
- Agayvli  
'Old'

- Vsgihnv Iyusdi  
'For That Reason'
- Aktahna'i  
'Knowledgeable'
- Asgayegvsda  
'Handsome'
- Dawisgvhi  
'Slippery' 'Smooth'
- Gadohi  
'On/In the Ground'
- Gayula  
'Already'
- Gvhwanosda  
'Whole'
- Gvhnoda  
'Alive'
- Gvhnagalsdi  
'Active'

- Agihliyi  
'Pain'
- Ale  
'Almost'
- Amayi  
'In Water'
- Asgwala'i  
'Short'
- Ganvhida  
'Long'
- Ehlawe'i  
'Quiet'
- Eligwu  
'Can'
- Elisdi  
'It seems'
- Gadulida  
'Wet'

# Adjectives / Adverbs

- Gvwatvhwida  
'All Around'
- Nikv'i  
'Everywhere'
- Hyatohli  
'Narrow'
- Juhnajosdi  
'Sour'
- Nugvwiysv  
'Main' 'Primary'
- Gasaka  
'Light (weight)'
- Uhyvsdi  
'Strong (taste)'
- Ganosgida  
'Stolen'

- Hlesdi  
'Don't'
- Si  
'Still' 'Yet'
- Hlega  
'A While'
- Hleki  
'Soon'
- Jiyukdi  
'Straight'
- Ijula  
'Both'
- Vsgwatla  
'Neither'
- Nahiyu'i  
'Then'

- Adage'i  
'Very Young' 'New'
- Uhyvdli  
'Cold (adj)'
- Uditlegi  
'Hot (adj)'
- Asesvda  
'Withdrawn'
- Atolida  
'Borrowed'
- Ayo'uhli  
'Lame' 'Crippled'
- Galijohida  
'Fat (living)'
- Gvjahlanvhi  
'Fried'
- Hlawotuha'i  
'Muddy'

- Gosdayi  
'Sharp'
- Gosdayuhli  
'Dull'
- Utugi  
'Hope'
- Unegihldi  
'Ugly'
- Ilvsgi  
'Few'
- Ukahyoda  
'Dry'
- Adawehi  
'Magical'
- Agosdi  
'Raw'
- Dikewi  
'Blind'



## Parts of the Body

Jiyelv'i	'My body'
Jisgoli	'My head'
Jigatoli	'My eye'
Dijigatoli	'My eyes'
Ji'leni	'My ear'
Diji'leni	'My ears'
Agwoyeni	'My hand'
Digwoyeni	'My hands'

Nikv'i	'Everywhere'
Aktisi	'Right'
Aksgani	'Left'

Hasvnga!	'Touch!'
Agwehsdaneha	'I'm hurting/aching'
Jehsdaneha	'You'
Uwehsdaneha	'S/he'

Hiyelv'i	'Your body'
Hisgoli	'Your head'
Hiktoli	'Your eye'
Tiktoli	'Your eyes'
Hi'leni	'Your ear'
Ti'leni	'Your ears'
Joyeni	'Your hand'
Dijoyeni	'Your hands'

Ayelv'i	'His body'
Asgoli	'His head'
Aktoli	'Her eye'
Diktoli	'Her eyes'
Ga'leni	'Her ear'
Diga'leni	'Her ears'
Uwoyeni	'His hand'
Juwoyeni	'His hands'



Photo: Wyman Kirk  
 ႥႦႦႦႦႦႦ  
 'Beefcake'

# Ade<sup>↗</sup>la Adehloqwa<sub>↓</sub>sdi



- Ade<sup>↗</sup>la 'Money'
- A<sup>↗</sup>delv<sup>↑</sup>'i 'Dollars'

Sa<sub>↓</sub>gwu<sup>↑</sup> iya<sup>↗</sup>dan<sup>↗</sup>tehdi



Uhno<sup>↑</sup>sda /  
Sa<sub>↓</sub>gwu<sup>↑</sup> a<sup>↗</sup>delv<sup>↑</sup>'i



Hisgi iya<sup>↗</sup>dan<sup>↗</sup>tehdi



Hisgi a<sup>↗</sup>delv<sup>↑</sup>'i



Sgo<sup>↗</sup>hi iya<sup>↗</sup>dan<sup>↗</sup>tehdi



Sgo<sup>↗</sup>hi a<sup>↗</sup>delv<sup>↑</sup>'i



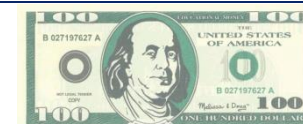
Ginut<sup>↑</sup>di



Hiksgo a<sup>↗</sup>delv<sup>↑</sup>'i



Sgo<sup>↗</sup>hi<sup>↗</sup>tsgwa a<sup>↗</sup>delv<sup>↑</sup>'i



## Kinship

- Agiji : My Mother
- Agidoda : My Father
- Digigayvlige : My Parents
- Agilisi : My Grandmother (Maternal)
- Aginisi : My Grandmother (Paternal)
- Agidudu : My Grandfather
- Agitlogi : My Aunt
  - Digitlogi : My Aunts
- Agiduji : My Uncle
  - Digiduji : My Uncles
- Agweji : My Child
  - Digweji : My Children
- Gusdi Agwvhni : My Cousin
  - Gusdi Digwvhni : My Cousins

## Woman Speaking

- Josdadalvi : My Sister
  - Jojadalvi : My Sisters
- Agido : My Brother
  - Digido : My Brothers



## Man Speaking

- Josdadanvtli : My Brother
  - Jojadanvtli : My Brothers
- Agido : My Sister
  - Digido : My Sisters

# Grammar: Pronoun Prefixes

- Cherokee uses what are known as “Pronominal Prefixes” on verbs, nouns, and adjectives/adverbs. “Pronominal” is just another word for “pronoun.” On verbs, they serve the purpose of indicating who is doing the action. On nouns, they indicate the person as the specific doer or state such as /Ji-jalagi/ ‘I am Cherokee’ or /digadeyohvsgi/ ‘I am the teacher.’ On adjectives and adverbs, they state a specific person as possessing the quality of the adjective/adverb as in /jiyanuli/ ‘I-fast’ or /ak-sganoli/ ‘I-slow.’
- There are four “sets” of pronominal prefixes in Cherokee:

Set A	Set B	Person	Passive
-------	-------	--------	---------

These can be found and used on various verbs, nouns, and other parts of speech. Some verbs can, and do, use all of these prefixes whereas some verbs can only use Set A and B or Person.

# Grammar: Pronoun Prefixes

## Set A & Set B Pronoun Prefixes

- A and B are the two most common sets with ten basic pronoun forms found in each. The difference between them is that Set A tends to be on active verbs, especially transitive verbs, while Set B are used on stative or passive verbs – This is not absolute.

## Person Pronoun Prefixes

- Person Prefixes denote both a person as the subject and as the object of the statement. These prefixes can be used on specific verbs to indicate ideas such as /gv-gowhtiha/ ‘I see you.’ The prefix here, /gv-/, indicates ‘I’ as subject and ‘You’ as object.

## Passive Pronoun Prefixes

- Passive Prefixes are similar to the Person Prefixes, but they invert the meaning away from an active expression and emphasize the person as the receiver of the action. They are the least used of the pronoun sets. The nature and function of these prefixes will be addressed at a later date.

# Grammar: Pronoun Prefixes

- Verbs – **Set A**

/ji-woniha/ ‘I’m speaking’    /hi-woniha/ ‘You’    /ga-woniha/ ‘S/he’  
/g-vnisdi’a/ ‘I’m cooking it’    /h-vnhisdiha/ ‘You’    /g-vhnisdiha/ ‘S/he’

- Verbs – **Set B**

/agi-ha/ ‘I have it’                      /ja-ha/ ‘You’                      /u-ha/ ‘S/he’  
/agw-ehluga/ ‘I’m yelling’    /j-ehluga/ ‘You’                      /uw-ehluga/ ‘S/he’

- Verbs – **Person Set**

/gv-gowhtiha/ ‘I see you’                      /sgi-gowhtiha/ ‘You see me’  
/ji-sdeli’a/ ‘I’m helping him’                      /ijv-sdeliha/ ‘I’m helping you all’

- Verbs – **Passive Set**

/vgi-gowhtiha/ ‘I’m being seen’                      /aji-gowhtiha/ ‘S/he’s being seen’  
/ej-vhniha/ ‘You’re being hit’                      /ag-vhniha/ ‘S/he’s being hit’

# Grammar: Pronoun Prefixes

- Person Set Pronominals

One note about the Person Set Pronouns – There are specific verbs that relate to “People” that only use this pronominal set such as in the verb /ahwatvhidoha/ ‘She’s visiting him.’ However, this set can also be used on select Set A and B verbs as well when the idea deals with a person as subject and as object. /Jiy-vkewa/ ‘I forgot him’ is an example where the verb is normally Set B.

- Verbs – Non Human

As in English, there are Cherokee verbs that do not pertain to people. These are things such as weather or objects in action. These forms are marked with a pronominal, but only in the “s/he” form.

/a-gasga/ ‘It’s raining’      /u-ditlega/ ‘It’s hot’      /a-yogi/ ‘It’s breaking’

/a-daleniha/ ‘It’s starting’      /a-hli’ilidoha/ ‘It’s taking time’

/a-svga/ ‘It smells’      /ni-g-alstanvsga/ ‘It’s happening/becoming’



## Grammar: Pronoun Prefixes

- Set A and Set B Pronominal Prefixes

Can be grouped into three “persons.”

- First Person: “I”

Any pronoun in which “I” am involved will be First Person. This includes forms involving “I” and “You” or “I” and “Him” or “Her.”

- Second Person: “You”

Any pronoun in which “You” are involved, but not “I,” will be Second Person. This includes forms involving “You” alone or “You” and “Him/Her” or “They.”

- Third Person: “S/he”

Any pronoun in which “He/She” is involved, but not “I” or “You” will be Third Person. This includes forms involving “Him/Her” or “They.”

- Remember that these pronoun prefixes can also be used on nouns, adjectives, and adverbs too.



# Grammar: Set A Pronoun Prefixes

- Set A Prefixes: Often used on Action Verbs

## First Person

### Before Consonant Before Vowel

I	/ji-/	ji-woniha	/g-/	g-ega
I & You	/ini-/	ini-woniha	/in-/	in-ega
I & You & S/he	/idi-/	idi-woniha	/id-/	id-ega
I & S/he	/osdi-/	osdi-woniha	/osd-/	osd-ega
I & They	/oji-/	oji-woniha	/oj-/	oj-ega

## Second Person

You	/hi-/	hi-woniha	/h-/	h-ega
You Two	/sdi-/	sdi-woniha	/sd-/	sd-ega
You Three or More	/iji-/	iji-woniha	/ij-/	ij-ega

## Third Person

S/he	/a-/ or /ga-/	ga-woniha	/-/	-ega
They	/ani-/	ani-woniha	/an-/	an-ega

\*Third Person 'S/he' before the vowels /o/, /u/, and /v/ uses /g-/. /g-ohweli'a/ 'S/he's writing'.

## Grammar: Set B Pronoun Prefixes

- Set B Prefixes: Often used on Passive/Stative Verbs

### First Person

#### Before Consonant   Before Vowel

I	/agi-/	agi-ha	/agw-/	agw-ohiyuhiha
I & You	/gini-/	gini-ha	/gin-/	gin-ohiyuhiha
I & You & S/he	/igi-/	igi-ha	/ig-/	ig-ohiyuhiha
I & S/he	/ogini-/	ogini-ha	/ogin-/	ogin-ohiyuhiha
I & They	/ogi-/	ogi-ha	/og-/	og-ohiyuhiha

### Second Person

You	/ja-/	ja-ha	/j-/	j-ohiyuhiha
You Two	/sdi-/	sdi-ha	/sd-/	sd-ohiyuhiha
You Three or More	/iji-/	iji-ha	/ij-/	ij-ohiyuhiha

### Third Person

S/he	/u-/	u-ha	/uw-/	uw-ohiyuhiha
They	/uni-/	uni-ha	/un-/	un-ohiyuhiha

\*Third Person 'S/he' /u-/ before vowel /a/ deletes /a/. /U-duliha/ 'S/he wants it'.

# Grammar

## • Set A \*Often Action Verbs

/ji-/	/g-/	'I'
/hi-/	/h-/	'You'
/ga-/ or /a-/	/-/	'S/he'

## • Set B \*Often Stative Verbs

/agi-/	/agw-/	'I'
/ja-/	/j-/	'You'
/u-/	/uw-/	'S/he'

/u-/ before vowel /a/  
deletes the vowel leaving  
only /u-/.

/u-(a)dega/ = /u-dega/

/u-(a)duliha/ = /u-duliha/

## Set A

- |                                     |                       |                     |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| • ji-gowhtiha<br>'I see it'         | hi-gowhtiha<br>'You'  | a-gowhtiha<br>'He'  |
| • ji-doga<br>'I'm standing'         | hi-doga<br>'You'      | ga-doga<br>'She'    |
| • ji-sgwatle'a<br>'I'm catching it' | hi-sgwatleha<br>'You' | a-sgwatleha<br>'He' |
| • g-ega<br>'I'm going'              | h-ega<br>'You'        | -ega<br>'She'       |

## Set B

- |                              |                    |                   |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| • agi-ha<br>'I have it'      | ja-ha<br>'You'     | u-ha<br>'He'      |
| • agi-neha<br>'I have it'    | ja-neha<br>'You'   | u-neha<br>'She'   |
| • agw-otla<br>'I'm sitting'  | j-otla<br>'You'    | uw-otla<br>'He'   |
| • agw-aduliha<br>'I want it' | j-aduliha<br>'You' | u-duliha<br>'She' |

# Grammar

- Set A – Set B

/sdi-/ /sd-/ ‘You Two’

/iji-/ /ij-/ ‘You All’

- Set A

/osdi-/ /osd-/ ‘She & I’

/oji-/ /oj-/ ‘They & I’

- Set B

/ogini-/ /ogin-/ ‘She & I’

/ogi-/ /og-/ ‘They & I’

The forms for ‘You Two’ and ‘You All’ are the same for Set A and Set B.

## Set A

• ni-sdi-we’a ‘You two’	n-iji-we’a ‘You all’	n-osdi-we’a ‘He & I’	n-oji-we’a ‘They & I’
• sdi-sdu’iha ‘You two’	iji-sdu’iha ‘You all’	osdi-sdu’iha ‘He & I’	oji-sdu’iha ‘They & I’
• sd-uteha ‘You two’	ij-uteha ‘You all’	osd-uteha ‘He & I’	oj-uteha ‘They & I’
• sd-ega ‘You two’	ij-ega ‘You all’	osd-ega ‘He & I’	oj-ega ‘They & I’

## Set B

• sdi-ha ‘You two’	iji-ha ‘You all’	ogini-ha ‘He & I’	ogi-ha ‘They & I’
• sdi-neha ‘You two’	iji-neha ‘You all’	ogini-neha ‘He & I’	ogi-neha ‘They & I’
• sd-adega ‘You two’	ij-adega ‘You all’	ogin-adega ‘He & I’	og-adega ‘They & I’
• sd-aduliha ‘You two’	ij-aduliha ‘You all’	ogin-aduliha ‘He & I’	og-aduliha ‘They & I’

# Grammar: Pronoun Prefixes

- Nouns – Discreet (Not Derived from Verb)  
/ji-jalagi/ ‘I – Cherokee’ /hi-sgaya/ ‘You – man’  
/ji-nvya/ ‘I – rock’ /iji-siqwa/ ‘You All – pig’
- Nouns – Nominalized (Verb Derived)  
/di-g-adeloqwasgi/ ‘I – Student’ Verb /adehloqwa’a/ ‘learning’  
/oji-wonisgi/ ‘They & I – Speakers’ Verb /gawoniha/ ‘speaking’  
/digvyeyohvsgi/ ‘I to You – Teacher’ Verb /gehyohvsga/ ‘teaching’
- Nouns – Verb Derived (Object)  
/digw-adehloqwasdi/ ‘My school’ /ak-sgwatlesdodi/ ‘My ball glove’  
/agi-wonihisdi/ ‘My language’ /ja-yvsdi/ ‘Your room’
- Nouns – Verb Derived (Quality – Characteristic)  
/ji-wonisgv’i/ ‘My speaking’ /de-ji-nogisgv’i/ ‘My singing’  
/g-oligv’i/ ‘My understanding’ /d-agi-lvhwisdanehv’i/ ‘My working’

# Grammar: Pronoun Prefixes

- Nouns – Innately Marked by Pronominal

/ji-sgoli/ ‘My head’                      /agw-ahnawo/ ‘My shirt’

/agi-doda/ ‘My father’   /gv-doda/ ‘I am your father’

/agw-ajeli’i/ ‘Mine”                      /agw-vsa/ ‘myself’

- Adjectives & Adverbs – Discreet

/ji-samadi/ ‘I – smart’                      /ak-sganoli/ ‘I – slow’

/g-osda/ ‘I – good’                      /ji-gigage’i/ ‘I – red’

/agi-yelvha’i/ ‘I – naked’                      /agw-eti/ ‘I – old’

- Adjectives & Adverbs – Unmarked for Pronoun

/yudaha/ ‘sometimes’   /ugodi/ ‘more’ ‘a lot’                      /sdikida/ ‘little bit’

/igada/ ‘some’ /nigada/ ‘all’                      /asdaya/ ‘hard’

/gayula/ ‘already’                      /nogwu/ ‘now’                      /nigohilv’i/ ‘always’

## 'Can' & 'Cannot'

- /Eligwu yigena/ 'I can go'  
Use /**eligwu**/ 'can' with prefix /**yi-**/ attached to verb.
- /Tla yigagena/ 'I cannot go'  
Use /**tla**/ 'not' with the two prefixes /**yi-**/ and /**ga-**/.
- /Tla yidigajinogi/ 'I can't sing'  
Verbs with /de-/ plural prefix, the 'cannot' form has /di-/ split /**yi-**/ and /-**ga-**/:  
/Tla **yi-di-ga**-jinogi/.
- Ideas related to this concept are "permission" type forms. Use this when asking to do something or to give or to deny permission to do something.

### 'Can' /Eligwu yi-VERB/

- |                                       |                   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Eligwu yi-gena.                     | 'I can go'        |
| • Eligwu yi-jigowata.                 | 'I can see it'    |
| • Eligwu yi-jinohisi.                 | 'I can tell him'  |
| • Eligwu yi-dagilvhwisdasi.           | 'I can work'      |
| • Eligwu-s h- <b>y</b> -ahnigi?       | 'Can you leave?'  |
| • Eligwu-s h- <b>yi</b> -gowata?      | 'Can you see it?' |
| • Eligwu-s <b>yi</b> -dejalvhwisdasi? | 'Can you work?'   |
| • Eligwu-s <b>yi</b> -deganelohvga?   | 'Can I play?'     |

### 'Cannot' /Tla yi-ga-V/ or /Tla yi-di-ga-V/

- |                                      |                    |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| • Tla <b>yi-ga</b> -gena.            | 'I cannot go'      |
| • Tla <b>yi-ga</b> -jigowata.        | 'I cannot see it'  |
| • Tla <b>yi-di-ga</b> -jinogi.       | 'I cannot sing'    |
| • Tla <b>yi-ga</b> -ganigi.          | 'I cannot leave'   |
| • Tla <b>yi-di-ga</b> -ganelohvga.   | 'I cannot play'    |
| • Tla <b>yi-ga</b> -jisdu'i.         | 'I cannot open it' |
| • Tla <b>yi-ga</b> -gadvga.          | 'I cannot do it'   |
| • Tla <b>yi-di-g</b> -vgilvhwisdasi. | 'I cannot work'    |

## GRAMMAR: /-hno/ ‘and’

/-hno/ ‘and’

Put it on the word or verb that ends the list or set of actions.

- Uhyvdlv’i agasgv-hno. ‘It was cold and raining.’
- Agiyejv’i agwadidvhv-hno ‘I woke up and got up’
- Gadu, juweji, hawiya-hno ‘Bread, eggs, and meat’
- Nihi aya-hno ‘You and I’

## GRAMMAR: /-s/ Question Marker

/-s/ Question Marker

Place the suffix /-s/ on the end of any word in the statement, preferably the first word in the sentence.

Uhyvdla.            Uhyvdla-**s**?  
‘It is cold’        ‘Is it cold?’

Agasga. Agasga-**s**?  
‘It’s raining’     ‘Is it raining?’

Ugodi-**s** jadvnele’i svhi jigesv’i?  
‘Did you do a lot yesterday?’

Jadawo’e-**s** svhi jigesv’i?  
‘Did you bathe yesterday?’

*\*Note: When the question words /Gado/ ‘what’ /Hadv/ ‘where’ /Hila/ ‘how’ /Gago/ ‘who’ are used, /-s/ is not necessary since these words are already “question” markers.*



## GRAMMAR: /Tla yi-/ Negation

- Negating a statement requires two things in Cherokee. The first is the word /**tla**/ and the second is /**yi-**/ or /**y-**/ which goes on the verb. Use /yi-/ when the verb starts with a consonant and /y-/ with a vowel. However, if the statement does not have a VERB to negate, then you have to use the form /tla yigi/ 'it is not' for present tense and /tla yigese'i/ for past tense.

### /Tla yi-/ Negation - Present Tense Verbs & Statements

- **Tla** **y**-uhyvdla. 'It is not cold.'      **Tla** **yi**-ganolvsga. 'It is not windy.'
- **Tla** ahida **yigi**. 'It is not easy.' \*No verb.
- **Tla** osda **y**-agwadanhta. 'I do not feel good.'

### /Tla yi-verb-e'i/ Negation - Past Tense Verbs & Statements

- Waji junohyvlsa, **tla** **y**-agwadidvhe'i. 'When the alarm rang, I didn't get up.'
- **Tla** gohusdi **y**-agwadvnele'i. 'I didn't do anything.'
- **Tla** **yi**-ganolvsg'e'i. 'It was not windy.'
- **Tla** ahida **yigese'i**. 'It was not easy.' \*No verb.

*\*On these past tense forms, note that the verbs end in /-e'i/ instead of the /-v'i/ listed in the lessons when they are negated.*

## GRAMMAR: /yi-/ or /y-/ ‘If’ Conditional Clause

**/yi-/** ‘If’ Conditional Clause      /yi-/ before Consonant      /y-/ before Vowel

This prefix has been used with /tla/ to make a statement mean ‘not,’ but it can be used by itself to make the statement mean ‘If.’

- **Yi**-jaduli, eligwu yijahesdi. ‘If you want it, you can have it.’
- Nigada dijadehloqwasdi **yi**-dotilosi, dinehldohdi dagvhwasei. ‘If you pass all your classes, I will buy you a toy.’
- Doyi **y**-uhyvdlesdi, jasalena tahnawo’i. ‘If it’s cold outside, put on your jacket.’
- Vsgina agehya **yi**-dayesi, tla yidagesi. ‘If that woman is going, I’m not going.’
- Gawohiliyvda **yi**-janhta, sdaya hinegi. ‘If you know the answer, speak up.’

In cases where you are making a “not” statement an “IF” clause, you will need to use the form **/yigi/** after the negation.

- Tla hyohlga **yigi**, sginohisi. ‘If you don’t understand, tell me.’
- Tla yijaduli **yigi**, tlesdi jijahwasi. ‘If you don’t want it, don’t buy it.’
- Tla yijanhta **yigi**, tla kilo yunhta. ‘If you don’t know it, no-one does.’

## GRAMMAR: /ji-/ or /j-/ Past Time Marker

/ji-/ Past Time Marker      /ji-/ before Consonant      /j-/ before Vowel

Use this prefix on Past Tense Verbs especially when a specific time has been mentioned or indicated. As a general rule, it is better to use it than not use it.

- Chanela atli'ilisv waji **j**-unohyvlsv'i 'The alarm rang at eight.'
- Sudali atli'ilisv **j**-agiyejv'i. 'I woke up at six.'
- Gahlgwogi atli'ilisv **j**-agwadidvhv'i. 'I got up at seven.'
- Sohnela atli'ilisv **j**-agwahnigisv'i. 'I left at nine.'

## GRAMMAR: /-gwu/ 'only' 'just' Suffix Marker

/-gwu/ 'only' 'just'      Suffix Marker

Place /-gwu/ on the end of a word/verb to add meaning of "just" or "only."

- Ganolvsgv-**gwu** asehno tla yuhyvdl'e'i. 'It was only windy, but not cold.'
- Sdikida-**gwu** kahwi agwaditahv'i. 'I drank just a little bit of coffee.'
- Svakta-**gwu** agigv'i. 'I only ate an apple.'

## GRAMMAR: /-**hehno**/ ‘because’ Suffix Marker

/-**hehno**/ ‘because’

Suffix marker /-hehno/ adds meaning of ‘because’ to statement. Put the suffix on the intended word – It attaches to any part of speech.

- Agwahnigisv akdvlgv-**hehno**. ‘I left because I was sick.’
- Agiyosisgv-**hehno** agigv’i. ‘Because I was hungry, I ate it.’
- Uweti-**hehno** jigesv’i, tla yaktane’i. ‘Because it was old, I didn’t use it.’
- Udulvhv-**hehno** wesa ojinatla’a. ‘Because she wanted it, we have a cat’
- Tla yigahigowata higayvlige-**hehno**. ‘You can’t see because you’re old’